

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

I propose now to comment very briefly on the question of radiological weapons. This issue, in which progress has long appeared possible, is one on which we seem to have shown a singular lack of imagination and commitment. The effort expended by successive chairmen of the Ad Hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons, and I single out as a particular example Ambassador Wegener of the Federal Republic of Germany, has been nothing short of prodigious. Last year, the Soviet Union and the United States chaired contact groups which attempted to reach consensus but ultimately fell short of the mark. I suggest that we should all review our positions with the objective of coming to an agreement and approving a draft treaty during the summer session. Let us consider the opportunities. First, it is an area in which the Soviet Union and the United States are in agreement, as indicated in their 1979 proposals. Surely this in itself is an important fact of life for this Conference. Secondly, a draft treaty would effectively ban a weapon system before it has been developed and deployed. Indeed, it would preclude the research and development of such a system. Finally, and of no small importance, it would give a psychological lift to the international community, which by all accounts not only needs but deserves it. We could provide a message of hope, where one is badly needed, and on a future-oriented problem which might contain lessons applicable to other issues.

We recognize that there are deeply-held convictions that the joint treaty of 1979 should deal with other aspects. While not disagreeing with those who argue that such other matters should be addressed, we suggest that such questions be addressed in subsequent negotiations. The Canadian delegation supports a review of the issues pertaining directly to radiological weapons with the objective of simplifying the negotiating process. Indeed, we could agree to a draft based on the original 1979 submission. It is in fact an embarrassment to us and, we suggest, to the Conference, that this relatively straightforward issue should remain unresolved. It would serve us all well to remove radiological weapons from our agenda by reaching consensus on a draft treaty. This would permit us, in turn, to focus our attention on other substantive issues.